

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 EUR-12 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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O 071317Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6374
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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JERUSALEM AND TEL AVIV FOR USDEL

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PBOR PDEV PEPR EG IS US XF
SUBJECT: CAIRO PRESS NONCOMMITTAL AS "FIRST PHASE" OF
- AHERTON MISSION ENDS

SUMMARY. EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF AHERTON VISIT RESTRAINED W
WITH LIGHT ATTENTION TO MODEST PROGRESS REPORTEDLY MADE
ON FIRST PHASE OF SHUTTLE. EDITORIALS REVEAL FRUSTRATION
WITH BEGIN "INTRANSIGENCE", IMPATIENCE WITH SLOWNESS OF
PROCESS AND AGAIN WISHFUL THINKING ABOUT WEIZMAN-BEGIN
DIFFERENCES. END SUMMARY.

1. DESPITE PROMINENT COVERAGE OF MARCH 6 AHERTON
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MEETINGS WITH SADAT AND FONMIN KAMEL, CAIRO DAILIES
UNABLE TO DISCERN MUCH PROGRESS IN CURRENT ROUND OF
NEGOTIATIONS AND COVERAGE RESTRAINED AT BEST. PRESS CITES
KAMEL COMMENTS THAT GOE MAINTAINING DEMAND FOR COMPLETE
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL
RIGHTS. KAMEL STATED SADAT WILL REPLY TO LATEST BEGIN
MESSAGE THROUGH AMBASSADOR EILTS AND NOTED THAT GOE HAD

ASKED UNITED STATES TO CONTINUE ATHERTON MEDIATION MISSION.

2. DAILIES QUOTE LIBERALLY, BUT SOBERLY FROM ATHERTON PRESS BACKGROUNDER, CITING "U.S. OFFICIALS CONNECTED WITH ATHERTON MISSION". PROGRESS IS NOTED ON QUESTIONS OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND NATURE OF PEACE, ALTHOUGH QUESTION OF PALESTINIANS REMAINS DEADLOCKED. U.S. INTERPRETS RES 242 TO MEAN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL "ON ALL FRONTS" AND IS SLIGHTLY ENCOURAGED BY RECENT ISRAELI LIMITATIONS ON SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY. U.S. HAS NO BLUEPRINT FOR A SETTLEMENT AND CAN ONLY OFFER SUGGESTIONS WHEN PARTIES AT A DEADLOCK.

3. EDITORIALS SEE LITTLE HOPE FOR BEGIN CHANGE OF HEART DURING UPCOMING WASHINGTON VISIT, DESPITE FACT THAT CONTROVERSY OVER INTERPRETATION OF 242 HAS DIVIDED ISRAEL AND CAUSED DISPUTE WITH CARTER ADMINISTRATION. RES 242 ISSUE, COMING ON HEELS OF SETTLEMENTS DISPUTE, IS SEEN BY AKHBAR AS MERELY ANOTHER BEGIN TACTIC TO "FRITTER" AWAY OPPORTUNITIES. ATHERTON HAS COUNSELED "PATIENCE AND GIVE-AND TAKE", NOTES AKHBAR, BUT PATIENCE HAS LIMITS AND GIVE-AND-TAKE MUST END IN POSITIVE RESULTS. EVEN CARTER "HAS GIVEN UP HOPE" ON ANY MEANINGFUL BEGIN RESPONSE TO PEACE INITIATIVE. THIS IS WHY CARTER HAS TAKEN "UNPRECEDENTED STEP" OF INVITING WEIZMAN, WHO IS "A MODERATING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFLUENCE" TO WHITE HOUSE FOR DISCUSSIONS.

4. COMMENT: WEIZMAN INVITATION TO WHITE HOUSE ALSO FEATURED IN FRONT-PAGE SQUIBS, QUOTING ISRAELI SOURCES, AND STRESSING CARTER'S APPRECIATION FOR WEIZMAN "MODERATION". WISHFUL THINKING ABOUT SERIOUS DIVISIONS WITHIN ISRAEL IS INCREASING LEITMOTIF IN EGYPTIAN PRESS. EGYPTIAN EXASPERATION WITH BEGIN BALANCED BY CAUTIOUSLY INDIRECT PRAISE OF SEEMINGLY MORE "REASONABLE" WEIZMAN. ALTHOUGH IT PERHAPS TRADITIONAL ARAB PRACTISE TO PLAY OFF RIVALS FOR POWER AGAINST EACH OTHER, CURRENT EMPHASIS ON WEIZMAN APPEARS TO REFLECT MORE LOCAL FRUSTRATION WITH BEGIN'S INTRANSIGENCE. EILTS

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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